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FROM THE EDITOR

Those who teach, who transmit knowledge and values to future generations have always enjoyed an exalted status in Jewish tradition. Thus this issue of the Journal finds those exalted ranks severely diminished by the passing of Dr. Miriam Gideon, ז"ל, and Hazzan, Doctor, and Professor Max Wohlberg, ז"ל. These two people have for many decades dedicated their lives not only to transmitting knowledge, but to instilling moral and ethical values of the highest level in their students. Each was a paragon of morality, ethics, and *menschlichkeit*. I personally, and all those who have been privileged, honored, and blessed to have their lives touch these two warm, caring human beings will miss them not only as teachers, but as role models. Each genuinely loved to teach and work with students, and was infinitely patient in that teaching. Future issues of the Journal will honor their lives and work, and indeed they will be sorely missed.

Hazzan Pinchas Spiro has for many years spearheaded a deep concern with the far-reaching effects on the *nusach* and the music of the synagogue service, which Hazzanim across the country have long felt since the inception of the Camps Ramah. He addresses this concern in his article **“Ramah-A Blessing and a Curse”**.

For most Hazzanim today, the preparation of children for Bar and Bat Mitzvah is a primary responsibility. As synagogues seek to gain and retain members more aggressively than ever, the subject of working with children with “special needs” is becoming an important issue. Hazzan Michael Krausman has for many years dedicated himself to the preparation of these children for this major life-cycle event which, until recently, had been unavailable to them, and the study of their physical, mental, and emotional needs. He is rapidly becoming a leading authority in this area, and his article entitled **“Teaching B’nai Mitzvah With Special Needs”** will surely be an eye-opener for every active Hazzan in the field.

As the twentieth century draws to a close, how appropriate that Dr. Michael Isaacson offers an analysis of the evolution of Jewish music in a unique fashion. It should be noted that Dr. Isaacson welcomes the feedback of the Journal readership to his study. All responses should be sent to the address or e-mail address listed in the front of the Journal and they will be immediately forwarded to Dr. Isaacson.

Louis Danto provides us with a brief glimpse into the past with his recollection of one of the greats in Jewish music, Herman Zalis. These

kinds of memoirs are invaluable insights into the “Golden Age of Hazzanut” for those not lucky enough to have experienced them for themselves.

Whereas we normally concern ourselves with musical changes in a forward-moving timeline, Charles Heller has taken a unique approach in converting what we know as a short melody for Psalm 118 (Pichu Li) into 18th Century musical roots.

Aryeh Finklestein in his “**Hazzanut in the Response of the Rosh**”, provides, as a “teaser”, an essay from his translation-in-progress for the Cantors Assembly of Akiva Zimmerman’s “*Beron Yachad*” and “*Sha’arei Ron*”. The full work is expected to be completed for the Cantors Assembly 1997 Convention in Chicago.

In our Book Review section, the volume “Eighteen Gates of Jewish Holidays and Festivals” by Isaachar Miron is reviewed by Samuel Rosenbaum. Hazzan Rosenbaum is at his most eloquent as he exposes many of the nuances that make this work so special.

Jeffrey Nussbaum, who contributed a review article for our last issue, again offers an interesting critique, this time on a volume dealing with a little-known subject - the activities of the early Jewish dance masters. The book, by Guglielmo Ebreo, deals not only with dance, but with the music associated with it, in a critical analysis. We thank Jeff for his enthusiasm and contributions to the Journal.

One of the most important contributors to the recorded history of Jewishmusic, especially Synagogue music, and most notably, the Hazzanic art, has come from Barry Serota, founder and President of Musique Internationale. Over the years, Serota has produced high-quality recordings of the great Hazzanic masters and synagogue music which exists today in many cases only in books long forgotten, or certainly unused. Serota has done a “yeoman’s job” in keeping this music and the artistry and memories of the Cantorial giants alive. Here is presented a review by Sholom Kalib of three cassettes produced by Serota of the great Hazzan Moshe Ganchoff. Recordings such as these are a must for every Hazzan who ascends the pulpit, for while reading about our Cantorial heritage in books is important, no words could ever take the place of the actual sounds of that heritage.

-Eric Snyder

ERRATA

Please note the following corrections to the December, 1995 issue of the Journal:

- On page 17, the second paragraph of Cantors Assembly President Abraham Lubin's acceptance speech should have read:

“When a Jew is about to perform a Mitzvah he pronounces the following words: *Bidechilu Vrechimu* (“With Fear and with Love”). At first this seems to be a contradictory set of emotions to accompany the performance of a Mitzvah, namely, fear and love. However, on closer examination, it is so true (and indeed appropriate) that a complete commitment and devotion to a noble cause brings together these two emotions of fear or trepidation and love. Fear in the sense...”

- Also on page 17, the name of Cantors Assembly past President Charles Surdock, ז"ל, should have appeared in the list of deceased Presidents.

- On page 80, in the Editor's Note, Isabel Belarsky was misidentified as the wife of Sidor Belarsky, ז"ל. Ms. Belarsky is the daughter of the late Mr. Belarsky.

The Journal apologizes for any inconvenience resulting from these errors.

RAMAH - A BLESSING AND A CURSE

By PINCHAS SPIRO

I have great empathy for the rights of women and most especially when they concern religious practices. At conventions, when I have a choice of attending either the so-called “Traditional” Minyan (where only men count), or the Egalitarian Minyan, I instinctively gravitate to the latter. However, I must confess that I usually leave that service after a few minutes because I simply can’t stand it. The drone of the Ramah “nusach” that almost everyone uses there is enough to make me want to climb the walls...

As a hazzan who has devoted his entire 46-year career to the preservation of our traditional sacred nuschaot and particularly the *nusach* of the weekday services, I feel greatly disturbed about the insidious Ramah scourge which is growing worse every year. Sometimes I get the terrible feeling that we have already reached the point of no return, לֹא יָשׁוּב .

In recent years, we have been hearing encouraging news about the willingness of those in charge of the Ramah camps to bring their musical programs back in line with the traditional mainstream. I am afraid however that this has merely been wishful thinking. The fact is that those in charge are not even aware that they are doing anything wrong, and that may be the worst part of the problem.

I am sure that I don’t have to state the obvious, that Ramah is a marvelous institution enabling Jewish children to live Jewishly 24 hours a day for two months each summer. It is an institution that for the past 50 years has inspired countless youngsters to become rabbis, cantors and leaders in the Conservative Movement. It is a shame that the originators and directors of Ramah neglected to plan its musical program properly. Instead, they have allowed it to develop into an aberration that now threatens to pollute the entire field of Jewish traditional music in America and beyond. Strong words? Perhaps, but they do not exaggerate the situation.

PINCHAS SPIRO is the Hazzan-Emeritus of Tifereth Israel Synagogue in Des Moines, Iowa. He is the author of a series of musical siddurim published by the Cantors Assembly and used in the numerous Ba'al Tefillah Institute programs throughout the country.

Anyone who has ever attended a summer camp or worked in one knows that summer camps have their own peculiar dynamics; they exist as though they were isolated islands. Perhaps, much of the appeal of life in summer camp is due to the fact that it constitutes a world unto itself, quite apart from real life on the outside. There are things that are designed and reserved specifically for summer camp. In the summer-camp setting they work well; in the outside world they seem ridiculous. A case in point are the typical summer-camp songs which are a lot of fun when sung in camp, but are rarely sung back home during the year. Ramah has developed its own camp songs, especially in the area of community worship. The problem is that no one in a position of responsibility realized what they were creating. No one sought advice or guidance from the leaders of the Cantors Assembly, the instructors of the Cantors Institute, or the half dozen acknowledged experts on Jewish music and *nusach*. Whoever happened to hold the position as music counselor each year was left to devise his/her own program. Subsequently, someone developed a simplification of the basic traditional modes for weekdays and Shabbat, and it was adapted for camp life and style. By any scholarly standards, these simplifications represented the lowest common denominator in Jewish musical taste. However, it worked well in camp, and it seemed a better option than no *nusach* at all. In retrospect, I feel that it would have been much better had the Ramah "*nusach*" simplifications and adaptations been completely untraditional, for then eventually they would have been completely rejected. As it happened, these *nusach* adaptations had just enough of the traditional flavor to make them seem legitimate

Originally, we all assumed that the so-called Ramah "*nusach*" would remain a pleasant summertime aberration that would cause no harm. Unfortunately, no one foresaw the tremendous growth of the network of Ramah camps and their direct influence on year-round youth organizations of the Conservative Movement: L.T.F., U.S.Y., and Kadimah. The members of these organizations look on Ramah as their model and ideal. Activities that are specifically designed for summer-camp are carried over into year-round programs. The logic goes something like this: If it is good enough for Ramah, it must be good enough for year round. Consequently, the aberrations of Camp Ramah are gradually finding their way into the regular repertoire of many of our congregations, often replacing ancient hallowed musical traditions.

To understand how this unthinkable situation has come about, one must remember that since Ramah has been in existence close to 50 years, the young campers of yesteryear are now themselves parents, congregants and leaders in our congregations. What really scares me is the fact that the majority of young Conservative rabbis and cantors in the pulpits of America are former Ramah campers. They received their inspiration at Ramah and consider Ramah melodies as the ultimate in Jewish musical liturgical achievement. These rabbis and cantors aim no higher than the Ramah model they know and love.

Some years ago, Dr. Ismar Schorsch, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, issued a booklet which he distributed to everyone connected with the Conservative Movement - rabbis, cantors, educators and lay-leaders. This booklet, entitled **THOUGHTS FROM 3080 BROADWAY**, consisted of his selected addresses and writings. One of these was an address which Chancellor Schorsch delivered in 1986 on the subject, **“Ramah at 40: Retrospect and Prospect.”** Chancellor Schorsch begins by speaking of the need for a comprehensive study, in which the achievements of Ramah “will be demonstrated soundly and impartially.” He then proceeds with an unbridled song of praise concerning anything and everything associated with Ramah. I did not become alarmed and dismayed until his address turned to the **music** of Ramah.

I would like to quote a significant paragraph from this address, but let me preface it by adding that immediately preceding that paragraph, Dr. Schorsch talks of the way campers have been afforded the opportunity to experience living as Jews in a community “governed by the rhythm of the parameters of Halacha.” He then adds the following, and I am quoting: “Paradoxically, constraint bred creativity. The fervor of communal worship at Ramah altered not only individual lives but also traditional practice. In time, Ramah gave rise to a distinct nusach, a recognizable liturgical mode. Great religious centers in the past were always distinguished by a specific adaptation of the common forms of prayer. The ability to generate such a nusach is the sign of a praying community. An individual may compose a siddur but only a community can produce a nusach,.... The diffusion of this Ramah *nusach* is tangible evidence of the impact of Conservative Judaism on popular observance.” (*The emphases are mine. PS*)

What we must surmise from this address is that Ramah has distinguished itself, like other great religious centers of our history, by altering the traditional practice and creating a new “*nusach!*” The logical conclusion is that since we have this wonderful new “*nusach*,”

we no longer have to follow the sacred musical **nuschaot** which have been passed on to us through countless generations. We should replace the old melodies of MI-SINAI with the new melodies of MI-RAMAH.

I know that Chancellor Schorsch is a great friend of Hazzanim and Hazzanut, and I truly do not mean to be disrespectful to him. But, I believe that he has expressed an opinion concerning a specialized vital area in which he has no qualifications. Before he gave this new, so-called, "**nusach**" his blessing, he should have considered its origins. In the early days of Ramah, the camp in the Poconos was the only one in existence. The music instructors in these formative years were, at best, well-meaning amateurs without the proper background in traditional liturgical Jewish music. Unfortunately, what they created back then has continued to increase in power and has developed a momentum that continues unabated to this very day, with no end in sight.

Few will disagree that the so-called Ramah "**nusach**" is a juvenile adaptation of the real thing - its lowest common denominator. We have ignored this situation far too long, and we must now try to change things before it is too late. The task will not be easy, but we have to start by declaring the Ramah "**nusach**" an insidious aberration. We must make an all-out effort to convince those who use it and those responsible for the educational programs of Ramah camps of the urgent need to return to the traditional fold and our ancient roots.

What makes this task so difficult is the fact that an increasing number of young Cantors Assembly members are alumni of Ramah. They still cling tenaciously to the "**nusach**" they learned as young men and women. I can understand their natural reluctance to give up something familiar from early childhood and replace it with something which is less familiar to them. What I wonder, when I listen to the droning Ramah chants at our conventions, is where were these same young men and women at many of our conventions when we conducted workshops that discussed in great detail the intricacies of our various sacred **nuschaot**? Where were they when we worried aloud who would replace the wonderful old **Ba'aley T'fillah** who guarded our ancient musical traditions and who had added warmth and inspiration to the services with their consummate familiarity with the various **nuschaot**? Where were they when we decided to make an all out effort to train young men and women in our synagogues as **Ba'aley T'fillah**, to carry on the precious musical legacy of our people? I must say that I am very pessimistic about the situation, and I shudder to think that in the future, Jewish liturgical music might be represented by the Ramah "**nusach**."

TEACHING B'NAI MITZVAH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

By HAZZAN MICHAEL S. KRAUSMAN

Every parent expects their Bar/Bat Mitzvah to sing like Moishe Koussevitzky, perform like Moishe Oisher and discuss the Torah like Moishe Rabbenu; unfortunately the student often appears to the teacher to be more like Moishe “Kapoier” (“Topsy Turvy”).

Throughout our career as Hazzan/B'nai Mitzvah teacher, we are often confronted by students with special needs or challenges that stand in the way of success. Often the prospect of preparing such a student causes anxiety on the part of the teacher, the parent and all involved-not to mention the student. Fortunately, most of us who teach B'nai Mitzvah are caring, patient and sensitive individuals. By considering the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, understanding the nature of the challenges that some students face and by designing our approach to these students in light of the individual differences that define each human being, it is possible for an instructor to achieve a great measure of success, and in the process, Shep a great deal of Nachas!

It may certainly be beneficial to reflect upon what becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah means: Clearly, by strict interpretation, Bar/Bat Mitzvah denotes the Halachic status of the individual. Having attained the age of Mitzvah, regardless of any ceremony, ritual or service in which (s)he may participate, a person becomes responsible and eligible for obligations and privileges as established by Jewish Law. Nevertheless, especially in our time, Bar/Bat Mitzvah constitutes a crucial passage in Jewish life; a passage from child to adult; from “kid” to responsible, accepted member of the Jewish Community. Families of students with special needs constantly struggle for equality and inclusion, so for them, the issue of acceptance is of vital importance and is a crucial aspect of the definition of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A teacher, then, must consider B'nai Mitzvah training in light of the expanded notion of the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Coupled with the preceding, is the reality that in the lives of a large percentage of our students and their families, Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the most significant and intensive period of contact with the synagogue, its profes-

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sionals and with Yiddishkite in general. Considering the aforementioned reality then, it is important for the instructor to have as an underlying objective to provide all B'nai Mitzvah with an authentic Jewish experience in non-shaming, positive environment in which every opportunity to achieve and to feel a sense of belonging is afforded. Many times, especially for students with special needs, Bar/Bat Mitzvah constitutes the first time they are able to set and realize specific goals. How wonderful it is when the first occasion on which a child excels takes place in a Synagogue!

Before attempting to examine the process of instructing B'nai Mitzvah with educational challenges, it is important to briefly examine some of the obstacles that can affect learning and to see what is meant by "learning disability".

The federal government defines learning disability in Public Law 94- 142, as amended by Public Law 101-76 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-IDEA):

"Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.. ."¹

The official government definition notwithstanding, it is difficult to determine with certainty whether or not an individual has a learning disability. Most of us at one time or another have encountered a subject in school or a task which we found extremely frustrating, have experienced a lapse in memory or have had difficulty understanding directions. The extent to which a difficulty becomes a disability, then, depends on how it affects the life of the individual.

Perhaps a better understanding of the nature of learning disabilities can be gained by looking at factors that can influence learning ability. Betty B. Osman, an educational therapist and author has compiled the following list?

1. Intelligence. While learning problems can be found in students with all levels of intelligence, students who possess average or above average intelligence but fail to achieve may have a learning disability. Osman points out, however, that intelligence should be thought more of as a measure of the rate at which a person learns rather than as a measure of capacity.

Jean, Lokerson; Digest #E516: Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, Va.; ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va.

² Betty Osman, Learning Disabilities A Family Affair; Random House, NY, 1979. pp 18-20

2. Sensory Deficits. Obviously, learning can be a challenge when sensory organs such as eyes or ears do not function properly. But even when these organs function perfectly well, a breakdown in processing information communicated by these organs to the brain can occur, resulting in a sensory or perceptual deficit. Betty Osman describes the phenomenon in this manner, “Their brains give them the wrong messages.”

3. Activity level and Attention Span. The ability to remain in one spot and concentrate on a task without being easily distracted has much impact on learning. However, students are often labeled “hyperactive” by a teacher who desires quiet and order more so than does an energetic student. Students, whether hyperactive or hyperkinetic (i.e. increased activity due to neurological factors) may or may not have learning difficulties.

4. Brain Injury and Minimal Brain Dysfunction (MBD). It is difficult to measure the extent to which elements such as low birth weight, oxygen deficiency or even physical damage to the brain are responsible for poor academic performance. In fact, some students with neurological impairment due to conditions such as seizure disorders or cerebral palsy, are quite successful in school.

5. Genetic Factors. Certain learning difficulties, particularly in males, appear to pass from one generation to the next.

6. Immaturity or Maturation Lag. Difficulties in learning may simply be the result of the fact that we all mature and develop at different rates. Just as the ability to walk manifests in different children at different ages, so too, such skills as the ability to read at a certain level, etc., may develop at different rates.

7. Emotional Factors. A student who fears failing, either because of perceived or real competition with siblings or peers, or because of parental pressure, may experience learning difficulties. Anxiety or nervousness engendered by family situation or diminished self image may also contribute to academic problems.

Students with special needs are afloat in a sea of labels and terminology. A prospective Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be described in terms including: LD (Learning Disabled), ED (Emotionally Disturbed), NI (Neurologically Impaired), MBD (see #4 above), ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) or Dyslexic. The latter two are perhaps the most prominent and merit further discussion.

Ask the average person, “What is Dyslexia?“, and the response will inevitably be “a condition that causes a person to see words backwards.”

That response reflects a common misunderstanding or at best an oversimplification. Although “dyslexia” is a term generally **applied to all**

reading disabilities, not all individuals who find reading difficult are dyslexic. There is little agreement on the part of experts as to what specifically causes and defines dyslexia³ but, it can generally be defined as: “. . . A severe difficulty in understanding or using one or more areas of language, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and spelling.”⁴ When an individual’s reading ability is significantly lower than his intellectual ability, any external cause notwithstanding, dyslexia is indicated. Some of the characteristics observed in dyslexics can include: average or above average IQ, good math skills, letter or word reversal, problems associated with coordination and left/right dominance, problems remembering letters and other symbols and auditory difficulties including understanding words, language fluency or problems with word sequence. moreover, dyslexics often have trouble transferring information from what they hear to what they see. Problems also tend to arise when they encounter words that are similar, (dog/dig) or words between which it is difficult to discriminate (on/no).⁵ Certainly, given the complex nature of dyslexia, highly qualified professionals are required to diagnose and treat this disability. Finally, it is important to remember that each student is different and an individualized approach must be devised to help in each case of dyslexia.

Almost every teacher has come into contact with Moishe. Moishe sits at his desk trying to spin his ruler on the point of his pencil. His book if he remembered to bring it to class, may be open and may even be at the correct page, but it is unlikely that Moishe is on the same line as you are. When you ask Moishe to read for the class, he, after trying to encourage you to ask someone else and requiring several minutes to find the correct place in the book, can manage only a few disjointed syllables. Although it seems rare that Moishe is paying attention to the teacher, the teacher inevitably expends much energy paying attention to Moishe. Sometimes, Moishe makes inappropriate comments; sometimes, his sense of humor is quite different than that of an exasperated teacher; many times, one finds Moishe seated in front of the principal’s office.

The preceding scenario is typical of situations associated with Attention Deficit Syndrome-ADD. Until recently, such students would have been described as “Brain Damaged” “Hyperactive Active” or “Hyperkenetic”

‡ Carl B. Smith & Roger Sesenbaum Helming Children Overcome Reading Difficulties ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading & Communication, Bloomington, IN.

‡ Dr. Jean Lokerson, Learning Disabilities: Glossary of Some Important Terms. ERIC Digest #E517: ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va. 1993.

‡ Roger P. Hanie, & Carol Weller, What Is Dyslexia: 1984 Digest. ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va 1985

but “ADD” more accurately describes the characteristic of this condition.” The American Psychiatric Association publishes the following parameters for determining if student is ADD:⁶

1. “Inattention . . . often fails to finish things he or she starts; often seems not to listen; is easily distracted; has difficulty concentrating on school-work or other tasks requiring sustained attention; has difficulty sticking to a play activity
2. Impulsivity . . . often acts before thinking; shifts excessively from one activity to another; has difficulty organizing work; needs a lot of supervision; frequently calls out in class; has difficulty awaiting turn in games or group situations
3. Hyperactivity; ADD may be diagnosed as with or without hyperactivity (if hyperactive, [may] show . . . the following): runs about or climbs on things excessively; has difficulty sitting still or fidgets excessively; has difficulty staying seated; moves about excessively during sleep; is always “on the go” or acts as if “driven by a motor””

Scientists are unsure about what causes ADD, but most agree it is genetic or prenatal in origin. Many times, drugs such as Dexedrine, Ritalin, and Cylert are given, but medication is not successful in all cases”

Obviously, the above information regarding the nature of learning disabilities is not intended to provide the Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher with the tools to make diagnostic decisions, but rather to serve as a basis for understanding students with special needs before attempting to teach them.

In addition to teaching students from my own congregation, I come into contact with special needs B'nai Mitzvah in my capacity as special needs Bar/Bat Mitzvah consultant to the Jewish Education Association that is part of a local Federation. Whether the potential Bar/Bat Mitzvah has profound developmental disabilities or minor learning difficulties, the process of instruction from the first meeting to the actual date of the event is essentially the same: Meeting and gathering information about the student; Designing a specific approach; Implementing and evaluating a course of instruction; Actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah day.

Especially when dealing with unfamiliar students or families, the first meeting to discuss Bar/Bat Mitzvah is crucial. It is vital to make the proper first impression, especially on the student. At this meeting the expectations

⁶ Council for Exceptional Children, Teaching Children with Attention Deficit Disorder ERIC Digest #462. ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children Reston, Va.
⁷ Mary E. Scott, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) Digest #445: ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va.

⁸ IBID

of the parent and student should be expressed. The teacher should cover items such as his availability and limitations vis-a- vis instruction times and Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. (e.g. ability to travel to or even attend a service at a distant congregation on Shabbat.) The actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah date and possible times of service (Shacharit vs. Mincha) may also be brought up. Incidentally, Shabbat Mincha/Maariv, when available, is a most appropriate choice for B'nai Mitzvah with special needs. While maintaining the advantages of Shabbat and inclusion of Torah Reading, the duration of the service is much shorter than Shacharit. Furthermore, Havdalah is a ceremony in which B'nai Mitzvah on almost any level can find a way to participate.

Before concluding the meeting, it is vital to learn as much about the student as possible; most parents are exceptionally well informed with respect to their special needs children. Include the nature of any special instruction or therapy the student receives, the names of professionals such as resource- room⁹ teachers or therapists in the data that is gathered. Permission to contact professionals should also be obtained from the parent.

It is critical to comprehend the experience of parents of special needs students. Often, the parent must serve as an advocate for the child, making sure that the child receives the optimum service from each of the many facilities and services with which the child is in contact. The latter may include special schools or school settings,(see note number nine below), therapists or other medical providers, recreational or social settings not to mention agencies that provide funding, insurance or grants. Moreover, issues of accessibility, availability or adaptability inevitably arise when dealing with institutions ranging from Synagogues to movie theaters. Having a child with special needs may be a source of shame for some parents; they are hesitant to tell a Hebrew School Principal or Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher about a child's disability out of fear that "everyone in the Shul will find out". It is not unusual for the presence of a child with special needs to have a significant impact on family dynamics. Issues such as decisions involving the welfare of the special child or relationships with other siblings can contribute to tension among and between family members. Bearing all of the preceding in mind then, it is understandable that these parents often are under considerable stress and are likely to appear anxious regarding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process.

There is a wealth of data that can be gathered about prospective Bar/Bat

⁹ Resource rooms are special educational environments within regular school settings that students go to for enhanced, individualized instruction in one or more subject areas.

Mitzvah students. In addition to information provided by the parents, teachers and therapists can be an excellent source of insight. By knowing about the student's preferred learning styles, favorite activities, level of reading and various other strengths and weaknesses as well as the way in which the student relates to other professionals, a teacher is better equipped to formulate his/her technique. Hence, it is extremely valuable to obtain permission to contact such professionals and to seek their advice and where appropriate, assistance.

For a Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher without formal education in the area of special education, it is invaluable to have the support and council of a qualified professional. I am most fortunate to work with Wendy Chesnov, who is the Director for the Department for Special Education of The Jewish Education Association of Metro West. Not only do I benefit from her expertise and sensitivity when working with students that she refers, but also when teaching B'nai Mitzvah that come through my Synagogue Hebrew School. Offering frequent feedback and support, Wendy serves as an interpreter of information from the various professional sources outlined above while providing her own expert assessment of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. One of the tools that a professional may use in assessing a student is the student's "Individual Educational Program" or IEP ¹⁰. This document is prepared by teachers with, in some cases, parental input, and is constantly updated and reevaluated as the student progresses throughout the educational system. Speaking in very concrete terms, the IEP sets out specific goals and objectives concerning the student together with an assessment of the student's strengths and weaknesses. The final step in the process of gleaned information in cases where students come from outside your congregation, is to contact the clergy and Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher at the student's home synagogue. Professional courtesy dictates that permission must be obtained before teaching the child of a member of an neighboring congregation. Moreover, information about the typical Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the customs and traditions of the Synagogue (women's status etc.), the student's history in the Temple Religious School and the relationship of the family with the Clergy should be factored in. Armed with the knowledge that has been garnered from all of the above sources, the teacher is now ready to put together a program for Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction

The process of designing a blueprint for teaching a particular Bar/Bat Mitzvah begins with determining long and short term goals: In which areas

¹⁰ B. Osman op at p 94

would you like to see the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student participate in the service? Which parts of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah would you like the student to learn first? Information gathered in the process described above will be brought to bear to answer the preceding questions and to help fashion the specific strategy for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. One of the pieces of information that is important to consider is the way in which your student learns most effectively. Characteristics such as: learning style (i.e. active vs. passive; pondering vs. impulsive)¹¹; and preferred learning modalities (i.e. auditory, visual or tactile)¹², determine how the Bar/Bat Mitzvah prefers to learn. In general I employ a multisensory, interactive approach; employing several modes and styles at the same time. For example, I may teach the blessings of Havdalah with the aid of a puzzle (see example below) which the student can put together while saying the Bracha and / or hearing me say it.

Many types of materials can be employed. Activities such as a paper Torah that uses ornaments and vestments attached by velcro which can be removed and applied repeatedly are extremely affective. Exercises which require the student to match words, phrases, Ta'amim, or even parts of the synagogue can also be helpful. Often the teacher must be prepared to abandon comfortable, conventional techniques in order to reach a particular student at his/her level. For instance, I have taught exceptionally active students with the aid of a plastic basketball set: the student shoots baskets while saying each word of his/her portion. Instructional materials that must also be accumulated include tapes (audio and/or video) and printed texts. Tailoring the material to the individual student is vital. Often the material on the tape must be repeated or recorded with blank space to allow the student time to repeat. Many times, in order to instill confidence, it is best to make a cumulative tape, adding each new section as the student is ready so the Bar/Bat Mitzvah can always identify with everything on his /her tape and not be overpowered by material not yet covered. Printed materials must be large enough to be comfortable for the student without being overwhelming. Care must be taken not to give the student too much material at one time. Setting short term goals which are not too difficult to accomplish insures quick success which boosts the student's sense of accomplishment and desire to learn more. Once again, it is important to consult the professionals with whom you have been in contact to review the aptness of the methods and materials in your design.

Just before the first meeting with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah it is useful to contact

¹¹ J. Lokerson op. cit. p2

¹² IBID

the student's parents to review their role as coach and the importance of positive feedback. The role of other siblings is also an **issue** worthy of discussion. Suggest that parents provide copies of B'nai Mitzvah materials to therapists and other teachers if possible to elicit their assistance. You may also discuss a system of rewards or incentives that would be effective in motivating the student. Allowing the students to earn "points" towards a purchase, movie or other activity, or providing a small toy or sweet, if permitted, after completing an assignment or making a special effort can be a critical element of successful teaching. I make it a practice to provide such a reward at the conclusion of each lesson.

Once the actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction begins, it is important to communicate to the student the fact that Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction is part of the process of becoming a responsible Jewish adult. Outline the goals and objectives you have set out and review the format of instruction. Ensure that the student understands all requirements e.g. practicing, attending lessons on time, attending services etc.. The system of feedback or rewards you have established may also be demonstrated at the outset. While teaching, it is vital to maintain a positive attitude at all times. Students with special needs may be very fragile or have poor self image. Every small success should be rewarded verbally with encouragement; "good job; way to go; you are going to be a great Bar/Bat Mitzvah!" As lessons proceed, the instructor must be extremely flexible. Strategies, goals, and materials may need constant reevaluation and revision. Students, like teachers, have days on which nothing seems to work, but a positive outlook must be maintained. Moreover, B'nai Mitzvah students may be on medication which is not always taken in time to be effective during the lesson. As I have previously stated, it is advisable to be in constant communication with parents and professionals.

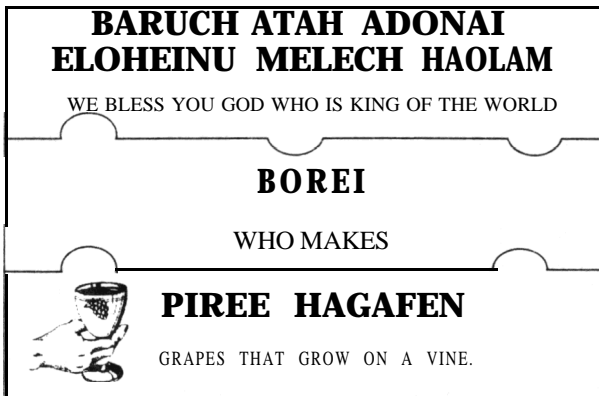
Obviously, especially, as the date approaches, it is of great importance to practice in the actual room in which the event will take place. Many rehearsals during which all the events of the Service are "walked through" insure the familiarity of the student and help the B'nai Mitzvah to feel more comfortable. I often allow the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to unlock the door, turn the lights on and help open the ark in order to facilitate their comfort in the Sanctuary. Several "dress rehearsals" involving the Rabbi and anyone else who may be on the Bima or involved with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are also necessary.

After months of planning and preparation, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date finally arrives. Maintaining a positive, upbeat atmosphere is crucial on this

day. Acknowledging feelings of nervousness or apprehension is always better than denying them; saying: "Of course you are scared, you have to stand in front of a large group of people, you'll feel better once you start." as opposed to: "Don't be silly, you've got nothing to worry about." As with all B'nai Mitzvah, in most cases, the service will go as planned but even if minor mishaps occur, it promises to be a most rewarding experience. Teaching Bar/Bat Mitzvah students with special needs can be an overwhelming prospect. However, by taking the time to understand the nature of disabilities and designing and following a systematic approach to each student, much satisfaction and success can be realized. Communication with a knowledgeable professional and with the parents and other supporters of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is also an invaluable part of the process. When asked why I enjoy teaching special B'nai Mitzvah I usually respond "I suppose I am a'Nachas Junkie"; for the feeling a teacher gets watching a student succeed when many, including the student, thought that success was impossible or when watching a parent witness what they had been afraid to even dream about, become a reality. is the epitome of Nachas. Maintaining an affirmative learning atmosphere and providing positive feedback will strengthen the special relationship between the student and teacher and form a portion of the uniquely Jewish experience that will dwell with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah for the rest of his/her life.

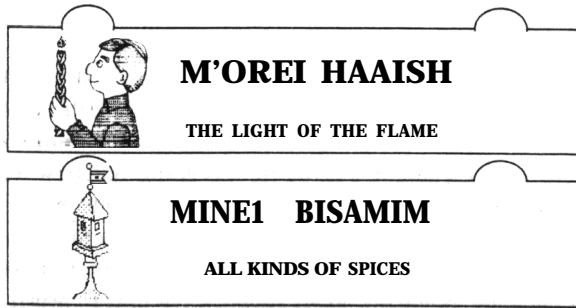
Sample Activity: Puzzle for teaching Havdalah."

Part A



Part B

The third piece of the puzzle is substituted to form other Brachot.

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HOW JEWISH MUSIC IN AMERICA CHANGED DURING THE 20TH CENTURY: A COMPARATIVE LIST FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

By DR. MICHAEL ISAACSON

As we are approaching the latter part of 1996 and our sensibilities are now recognizing and preparing for the transition into the next century and millenium, it is appropriate and beneficial to review the music of American Jewry and assess where it was, where it is going, and how it has changed.

The general value of this exercise is that it emphasizes through one cultural indicator - music - that Judaism, even in the recent past, has., indeed, changed dramatically and that, in the larger historic purview, Jewish customs, practices, even values were never carved in stone but were consistently reinterpreted from age to age in order to best serve the people who utilized them.

As an overview, I've organized an annotated comparative list of observable changes in American Jewish music during this century, followed by some conclusions which may be drawn by the trends founded upon this comparative movement.

18 POINT ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF 20th CENTURY JEWISH MUSIC

God as an awesome King - Buher's I-Thou intimacy with God

If God is approachable by everyone, professional intercedents are no longer necessary.

Formal architectural distance - Organic, architectural intimacy

The design of Sanctuaries reflect a movement away from an Awesome God to a closer parent.

Study & prayer as dominant force - Replaced by cultural & sociological values.

If prayer and knowledge are less important than "being" within a

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group, learning is secondary to popular association.

Predominantly children of immigrants · Predominantly children of Americans

Old host cultural values now replaced by American host values.

**High Art Music · Easier understood music of wider appeal
Operatic · Popular**

Example of the above, European artforms discarded in favor of American disdain for elitism.

German high cultural model · Israel popular model

It is interesting to note that one foreign model replaces another with less struggle than defining what the American model could be. Ultimately America is understood as a Christian assimilative experience.

Liturgical settings in Hebrew · Settings in Hebrew, English or both

A transitional generation of composers began to let in less educated Jews and non-Jews by mixing and varying the setting of the liturgy in new ways; simultaneously adding its English translation to the original Hebrew text.

Literal use of liturgy · New, English lyrics relating loosely to primary texts

Less comfortable with both classical and idiomatic Hebrew, still later composers allude to the Hebrew text with English lyrics that comment in an independent, assimilated way.

Romanticized European past · Varied view and early enthusiasm for experimentation

Traumas of the 20th Century including both World Wars, the Shoah, the Nuclear Age, Viet Nam, et al. erase the kind, storybook quality of Judaism and open up the possibilities of reflecting these traumas within the devotional experience.

Palestine, later Israel, as America's center of Judaism · America as its own center

As romanticism is replaced by realism, Israel's own foibles and prejudices are seen to preclude a logical evolution of European models which most American Jew emulate. Frustrated with Israel's iconoclasm, Americans finally look into themselves.

Hazzanic and choral emphasis · Solo and congregational emphasis

As familiarity with a parent God and structural nearness develops, education becomes secondary and professional intercedents like Hazzan and choirs are perceived as impeding the child-like intimacy.

Idiomatic safeness · Musical experimentation · Idiomatic safeness · Comfortable mediocrity · Daring Greatness · Comfortable mediocrity.

Full cycles of progressiveness and conservatism have always been identified at the end of centuries.

Ashkenazic musical supremacy · Increasing use of Sephardic music Sect isolation & distinctness of repertoire · increasing cross cultural world view

With increased recordings and exposure to once exotic sects of Yemenite, Persian, and, in general, Sephardic culture, Ashkenazim begin to incorporate a larger sound of world Jewry into their understanding.

Ignorance of Christian ways · Knowledgeable, more assimilated in Christian America

American Jews, who once feared entering a church, now are familiar with the great musical settings of the Masses, Requiems, Glorias, et al. The assimilative process is evident in later synagogue composers' work.

Little grass roots recordings · Burgeoning Audio/Video production & documentation

The end of this century is enjoying an explosion of recordings which will ultimately find their true value with time; the kitsch will be forgotten but the art will endure.

If history continues to be the teacher it has always been, synagogue music in the 21st Century will, likewise, continue to reflect:

- A. American Jewry's vitality as a world leader in contemporary Jewish music.
 1. Its level of education, sponsorship, and demand for new composers and their music.
 2. Acknowledgement, understanding, and (hopefully) forgiveness that Israel will never share America's values and appreciation for this genre.
- B. The architecture, style, and image of each Temple and the congregants who support it.

1. The financial support needed to uphold these values within the music program.
- C. The secular music (minus two to five years) being heard outside of the synagogue.
1. Popular language, melodic & harmonic conventions, and instrumentation.

HERMAN ZALIS - A RECOLLECTION

By LOUIS DANTO

(Mr. Herman Zalis was born in Russia and received his early musical education in Odessa. He studied harmony with the world-renowned David Novakowsky, and, at one time, was a student of Rimsky-Korsakoff at the Imperial Musical Academy of Petrograd. Mr. Zalis came to America in 1923 and joined the Temple Emanu-El of Boro Park, Brooklyn, NY choir, as director, in 1924. He has written many liturgical compositions of lasting musical value which are sung in synagogues throughout the world. For twelve years he was in charge of musical orchestration for the RCA Foreign Department.)

As a boy, 8 years old, I was the soloist in the Suwalki Main Synagogue Choir. In 1936 a guest Hazzan came to Suwalki for the *Yamim Noraim..The Hazzan was Moishe Hendel. He made an unforgettable impression on me because he had a constant gesture which look like chewing, like malegeyre* (Yiddish for “ruminate”). And as a child I could not conceive the fact that a Hazzan is chewing on Yom Kippur. As I learned later, of course, he was not chewing. When I came to New York City in 1950 I met Hendel again and we became friends. He promised to help me by offering some hazzanut music, which I never got from him. I wanted so much to become a Hazzan, but without money I could not get far. Anyway a new acquaintance that I made was a fine person, a *talmud hacham*, who was a butcher in Boro Park, and he was a lover of hazzanut. When I came to visit him once, he introduced me to a young boy, about 10 years old, with a beautiful voice, who came to pick up a meat order. The butcher gave him a candy and asked him to sing for me in the store. Guess who this boy was? - the famous Hazzan of today - Jackie Mendelson.

The butcher called up the Choir Master of Temple Emanu-El of Boro Park and told him about me, the newcomer from Italy, who is a hazzanut lover and student. And who was the Choir Master at Temple Emanu-El in Boro Park? - Herman Zalis. This was my first encounter with Hazzan Zalis. When I came to audition before him, he had invited David Kussevitsky,

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who accompanied me in “Una Furtiva Lagrima”. Zalis was very impressed and offered to teach me without money, but made me promise him that I will get a position I’ll pay him back. He taught me for three years. He was a very meticulous teacher. Since he was the Choir Master at the time that Kwartin was the Cantor at Temple Emanu-El, he was used to Kwartin’s style and taught me recitatives with a lot of coloraturas. Zalis was very friendly with Katchko and Kwartin and used to tell me all kinds of stories about both of them.

My main knowledge of nusach haTefillah is from Herman Zalis.

HAZZANUT IN THE RESPONSA OF THE ROSH

By ARYEH FINKLESTEIN

Rabbi Asher ben Jehiel, also known as the Rosh, was born in Germany. A descendant of Rabbeinu Gershom Me'or Ha-Golah, the Rosh is considered among the most important of medieval Talmudists. With the death of his illustrious teacher, Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg, in prison, Asher ben Jehiel was recognized as his successor and became the spiritual leader of German Jewry. As circumstances worsened for the Jews of Germany, the Rosh migrated to Spain, where he was appointed head of the Yeshiva in Toledo. His authority in Halachic matters was widely acknowledged, and questions pertaining to Jewish law were sent to him from many and disparate Jewish communities.

More than a thousand of his replies to such queries are included in his *RESPONSA*, which was published in Constantinople in 1517. Several of the questions posed to the Rosh concern hazzanim. In the most famous of these (4:22), the Rosh had been asked if it was permissible to appoint a boy of Bar Mitzvah age to be the congregation's regular *Sh'liach Tzibbur*. "While a thirteen-year old boy is allowed to lead the services occasionally," the Rosh explained, "he can only be made the permanent *Sh'liach Tzibbur* when his beard is grown."

The lowly status of *Sh'lichei Tzibbur* in that period is amply attested as the Rosh continues in his responsum. "Concerning what you have written, about the custom in some places to appoint those who are ill-regarded within the community as *Sh'lichei Tzibbur*, know that I consider this to be a disgrace. It is as if one contends that such a position is not worthy of the well-born Jew, but is merely a craft for the skilled to practice." The Rosh adamantly regards as utterly inappropriate such contempt for the status of the *Sh'liach Tzibbur*. Indeed, he advocates that it is preferable that only those who are "well-born" and respected within their communities should serve as hazzanim. "Rather than just a skill, such sacred work is to be regarded as a glorious crown upon one's head."

Israeli-born ARYEH FINKLESTEIN is the son of the late Hazzan Zvi Finklestein, z"l, and the brother of Hazzan Meir Finklestein. He translated "Recent Archeology in the Land of Israel" (1984) for the Biblical Archeology Society. Aryeh has been Hazzan of Congregation Mishkan Tefila in Chestnut Hill, Mass. since 1986

A debate among the early Halachists had **sought to ascertain whether** a hazzan is to be considered a hired man, or as one who practices his craft for the benefit of the congregation. According to the CHO VAT YA'IR the hazzan does not hire himself out, but does hire out his skill. The KETZOT HA-CHOSHEN thinks that the status of a hazzan is equal to that of any other hired person, while the Responsa of Rabbi Yekutiel Enzel declare that the hazzan is to be regarded as a contractor. The hazzan, he maintains, has essentially been contracted to chant specific prayers on a monthly basis. It is significant that the Rosh sees the ***Sh'liach Tzibbur*** neither as a hired servant of the congregation, nor as a skilled professional. His holy task transcends such categories, the Rosh teaches; it is "a crown upon his head."

In the same responsum, the Rosh reveals his opinion about the hazzanim of his era. "It angers me that the hazzanim of this land exist only to give pleasure with their pleasant voices, and that our people seem unconcerned if their hazzan is found to be an evil man, so long as he sings beautifully. Did not G-d say, 'She hath uttered her voice against me, therefore I have hated her' (Jeremiah 12:8)?" The Rosh's statement here yields an important datum for the study of the history of Hazzanut. Namely, that even as early as the 13th century, congregations were wont to value the magnificent singing of a hazzan more highly than any consideration of his personal worthiness.

From the latter section of this same responsum, we learn that it was customary for a synagogue to appoint two hazzanim; one would lead services during the weekdays, and the other on Shabbat as well as on Mondays and Thursdays. The Rosh writes: "Those who appoint a hazzan whose beard has not yet grown to lead the services on the lesser weekdays, and think that this is acceptable because an adult hazzan has been appointed for Shabbat, Mondays and Thursdays, are in error. The lad is to be considered a regular hazzan because he has been appointed to lead services on particular days, notwithstanding the fact that another hazzan has also been appointed. A boy who has reached puberty may act as a hazzan only in a temporary capacity, and only if he has not been officially designated as a hazzan of the congregation."

Interesting information about contemporaneous communities as well as their financial circumstances may be gleaned from yet another important

response (6: 1). “You ask,” writes the Rosh, “about a congregation with limited means which must decide who is to take precedence, the rabbi or the **Sh’liach Tzibbur**? Know that if the rabbi is an eminent scholar, there is no doubt that the study of Torah comes before all else. If, however, the rabbi is not especially well-versed in the Torah, the **Sh’liach Tzibbur** comes first because it is he who fulfills the obligations of the many.”

Those today who insist on turning the synagogue service into a forum for “congregational singing” would do well to consult the Rosh on the subject (4: 19). He is highly critical of “those who sing along with the hazzan,” for they are “indulging in frivolous behavior.” According to the Rosh, “we are to scold those who raise their voices during the **Shemoneh Esrei** and the **Kedushah**. “ He pronounces emphatically: “The congregation should instead remain silent, and pay close attention to the blessings chanted by the hazzan so that they may respond properly with ‘Amen.’” The Rosh similarly forbids the recitation of the **Kaddish** together with the hazzan. “The congregant should rather pay heed to the hazzan in order that he may then respond **Amen** and **Yehei shmei rubbuh**. The same applies to the **Kedushuh**. The hazzan chants **Na’aritzchu** by himself until he reaches **Kudosh**, and only then does the congregation intone **Kadosh**. “According to the Rosh there exists a sharp division of labor between the hazzan and congregant, and their prescribed roles are not interchangeable. The hazzan is the **Sh’liach Tzibbur** in a quite literal sense. The congregation must have faith in his ability to represent it, and should therefore not sing along with him.

While the Rosh forbids the appointment of one “whose beard is not yet grown” as the congregation’s regular **Sh’liach Tzibbur**, he does not prohibit the same youth from leading the service occasionally, “like any member of the community who leads the service when he is moved to do so, so long as he has not been officially appointed by the congregation, nor by the regular **Sh’liach Tzibbur** who might assign him these duties for brief periods in order to lighten his own burden.” (4: 19). It is interesting to note that in the days of the Rosh it was customary for hazzanim to appoint assistant **Sh’liach Tzibbur** to aid them in their duties.

The RESPONSA has recorded for posterity (15:9) an incident in which a student **Sh’liach Tzibbur** was verbally abused by a congregant. Although the “wicked butcher,” as the Rosh describes him, was ostracized by the

community, he proved unrepentant. The Rosh decreed his punishment: "A proclamation is to be made in which this man is declared banned. He must remove himself from the community for thirty days, after which he must publicly seek the forgiveness of the *Sh'liach Tzibbur*. "

An intriguing Halachic problem presented itself in the days of the Rosh. When a hazzan who is also a shochet is disqualified from practicing one of these two vocations, does the disqualification necessarily prevent him from serving in the other capacity? In the RESPONSA (58:4) we have the case of a man who had betrothed a young woman in the presence of a hazzan and a second witness, and had properly complied with the Halachic requirements by saying to his bride: "Behold thou art consecrated unto me." The young woman later married another man without having obtained a divorce from her husband, who complained that legally she was still his wife. The young woman's mother then "bribed the *Sh'liach Tzibbur*, "in the uncompromising words of the Rosh, to testify falsely that the marriage ceremony had not, in fact, conformed with the Halachah. When it was discovered that the hazzan's testimony had been fraudulent, he was sentenced to suffer thirty-nine strokes of the lash and was fined fifty gold sovereigns. In addition, the judges ruled that "for five years he may not slaughter animals in this province, nor act as a *Sh'liach Tzibbur*. "It was further decided that if he were afterwards to do true penance for his sin, he would be permitted to return and resume his former profession.

After just one year the hazzan appeared again before the court, and informed the judges that since the day of his sentencing he had been piously fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. He begged the court to overturn his conviction and permit him to serve as both a *Sh'liach Tzibbur* and shochet anywhere in the province.

In his response, the Rosh posits that one who is so obviously "wicked in the eyes of Heaven and of his fellow creatures," and who had testified falsely "in order to alter a married woman's status for monetary gain," is likely still not trustworthy. It is probable that he continues to lie, and has not fully repented of his sins as ordered by the court.

The Rosh finally determined that while it is permissible for the wayward hazzan to resume his duties as a *Sh'liach Tzibbur* "if the congregation wishes him to be its *Sh'liach Tzibbur*, " he is prohibited from serving as a

shochet. The implication seems to be that the shochet's calling is somehow more important than the office of hazzan. One who has testified falsely is disqualified from serving as a shochet under any circumstances, yet if the congregation elects to have such a man be its representative in prayer before the Almighty, the Rosh does not forbid it.

A “KEEPER OF THE GATES” FOR OUR TIME

Reviewed by HAZZAN SAMUEL ROSENBAUM

Miron, Issachar. ***of Jewish Holidays and Festivals***, Northvale, NJ: JASON ARONSON, ISBN O-8766-563-7. Price, \$50. Illustrations by Arthur Szyk. Foreward by Elie Wiesel. Epilogue by Rabbi Irving Greenberg.

The richness of Issachar Miron’s masterpiece makes it difficult to classify. His use of the English language is unique in that the variety of meanings one can take out of his words can be endless to the thoughtful reader, so multifaceted are they.

Because he is an inspired poet and an acclaimed folk and classical composer, Miron has beautifully captured the essence, the honey and the vinegar of the wisdom, the mysticism, the liturgy, the folk culture, the melodies, the mysteries, the treasures of the Jewish heritage as it evolved through two millennia, in word and sanctity-evoking song woven around Israel’s ancient and contemporary festivals and holy days.

The concept of capturing the many meanings of Jewish life and traditions in terms of “Gates” is not unique, but Miron’s choice of “Gates” and the original perspective his words and music cast upon the ancient texts and teachings, qualify this volume as a valuable addition to the treasure of Jewish holidays, for he adorns them with flowers:

***Like flowers,
our-festivals reflect on earth
the savory splendor
from the scriptural gardens,
renewing your plain-spoken commitment
to others as to yourself.***

***Then inhale just a tiny,
yet larger-than-life,
puff of their redolent sanctity,***

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making peace with yourself,
keeping in your heart
the promise of our unity, asking yourself:
"Isn't this what I must do every day?"
and following your answer right away
by an even more important question:
'Have I done enough today?'
"The time of singing is come. "

Anyone even faintly familiar with Jewish religious literature must know the fascination that Jews have had for the number 18 and for the popular ethnic symbol of our days as “gates” through which we all must pass. For instance, every classic edition of both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds has a title page adorned with a drawing of a gate. Its title page is known as the *Sha’ar Blat*, Yiddish for “gate-page”. Most European-published prayer books from before the Holocaust likewise adorned their title pages with a rendering of a gate, and usually used the word “Gate” in their titles, e.g., “*Sha’arey Tefillah*”, Gates of Prayer, “*Sha’arey Yehudah*”, Gates of Judah, etc. Miron facilitates our journey by introducing before his *Eighteen Gates* two destination-marker gates, “In Front of the Gates”, with an epigraph pinned to it, *Lamps and Legends Turning On Your Headlights*; and “On the Threshold to the Gates” gate, again with a road sign: *Lord’s Life-Giving Gates*, to make sure that we won’t misstep from the right course.

A brief survey of only a few of our older prayer books revealed some seventy-five prayer phrases referred to as Gates of Wisdom, Gates of Mercy, Gates of Forgiveness, etc.

A little-known penitential prayer (*tehinah*) recited at the close of the Sabbath lists sixty-five “Gates of א in alphabetical order: ” Gates of Light”, “Gates of God’s Beneficence”, all the way through the alphabet to “Gates of Redemption for the Pious Ones”. The text is borrowed from the Jerusalem Talmud. Another prayer, *Sha’arey Armon*, Gates of the Temple, composed by the great 16th-century Hebrew poet *Eleazar Kallir*, is recited in the early part of the *Neilah* service, the final service of Yom Kippur, which in itself refers to the “closing of the gates of prayer” as the last opportunity for prayers of mercy before the conclusion of the Day of Atonement.

As one can see. Miron’s choice of this work and its title is not casual but

rather a rich mother lode of thought and meaning. Each of Miron's Gates sheds a fresh insight into the possible variety of meaning one can extract from the cycle of the Jewish festival and holy day calendar with word and song artfully crafted.

*Where there's a dream there is a song to awaken
the voice, a melody to restore the will, and a
flame to illuminate the way.*

*So I believe that jointly we can open the Lord's
life-giving gates, turning the divine streams
light and love onto the salvation-thirsty deserts **of**
our being.*

And although a thoroughly twentieth-century faithful Jew, he is in direct contact with our sages. Long ago the rabbis of the Midrash (collection of commentaries of the Torah and Talmud) advised: "If you come to the house of worship, do not remain standing outside the gate. But enter *delet lifnim delet*, gate after gate, until you reach the innermost gate." Miron has added immeasurably to the variety of gates.

In "Before the Law", one of the great parables of modern literature, Franz Kafka describes a man who comes to the gate of the Law. The doorkeeper says that he cannot admit him at the moment. The man waits. The gate of the law stands open, so the man strains to look inside.

The doorkeeper wants to help. He advises the man: "Try to get in without permission. But note that I am only the lowest doorkeeper. From hall to hall, keepers stand at every gate, one more powerful than the other".

The man is puzzled; he thinks the Law should be accessible at all times. But he decides to wait until he receives permission to enter. He waits for days and years. During all the long years he watches the doorkeeper constantly and learns every detail of his appearance. He forgets about all the other keepers of the other gates. This open gate seems to be the only barrier between himself and the Law. Finally, his life is about to end. Before he dies, all that he has experienced forms into one question. He beckons to the doorkeeper, since he can no longer rise. "Everybody strives to attain the Law. How is it, then, that in all these years no one has come seeking admittance but me?"

The doorkeeper answers, “No one but you could enter here, since this gate was reserved for you alone. Now I shall go and close it!”

Must man remain forever outside the gate? Kafka does not give us an answer. But the Midrash - and somehow, Miron, too - does give us the answer: “Do not remain standing at the outside gate, but enter *delet lifnim delet*, gate after gate, until you reach the innermost gate. In his inimitable fashion, Miron offers a reminder : At God’s gate there is no keeper. The gates are always wide open. All there is for man to do is to enter. Miron has presented us with the gift of “Eighteen Gates”, which will now and forever always remain open to our prayer:

*O Interactive Grantor
of the gift of life and learning,
restore to us:
the seeds -for love,
the wings -for hope,
the truth -for justice,
the harmony -for soul,
the tears -for happiness,
the equality -for freedom,
the swiftness for compassion,
the perceptive vision -for mind,
the warmth offeeling -for heart,
the outstretched hand -for peace,
the congregational response -for Amens,
the chorale of mixed voices -for Hallelujahs,
the world full of marvels -
for every day of the year,
instantly updating
our covenantal communications
as the sacred hand of equal commitment.*

“Eighteen Gates” is a must for anyone concerned with the continuity and understanding of the unique heritage which is Judaism.

BOOK REVIEW

GUGLIELMO EBREO OF PESARO: *De Practica Seu Arte Tripudii* (On The Practice or Art of Dancing)

Edited, translated and introduction by Barbara Sparti.

Published in (1993) by Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-816233-Z. 269 pgs \$59.

By JEFFREY NUSSBAUM

This book by OUP is an exquisitely produced publication that offers, for the first time, a complete English translation of Guglielmo's important 15th Century dance treatise, which is the earliest one extant. The activities of early Jewish dance masters have been documented by Cecil Roth and other Jewish historians and here the noted Renaissance dance scholar Barbara Sparti gives us a more in-depth look at the work and life of the most famous one, Guglielmo Ebreo of Pesaro.

The large treatise is presented with both a critical edition of the original Italian as well as in English translation on the facing page. Also included is a facsimile of the music, in 15th century mensural notation, along with the modern notation of the music on the same page. These monophonic tunes reveal themselves to be little gems of Renaissance dance music and, with an imaginative approach, could greatly augment a program of Jewish music. In Barbara Sparti's Introduction she presents an extensive biography of Guglielmo as well as essays on dance in 15th century Italian society, a full description and history of the *De pructica* as well as an analysis of the music. Also included is the *Autobiography* which gives further information on dance, artistic influences in Renaissance Society as well as the contributions of the patron families such as Sforza, Estes and Gonzaga. the cultural force of Humanism is demonstrated here to be most influential. Of course, the examination of Guglielmo's life will be of greatest interest to readers concerned with Jewish musical and cultural history.

Not only is this publication a thoroughly researched scholarly work but the design and packaging is beautiful. There are numerous reproductions of dance images as well as of famous dance and music patrons and maps. The inclusion of both the original Italian text alongside the English translation as well as the original music notations along side the modern transcription

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results in an important document for the scholar as well as for the reader who has a more casual interest. Those interested in Jewish studies, Renaissance studies or dance history owe Barbara Sparti a debt of gratitude for her excellent book.

Music Review

THREE NEW CASSETTES OF CANTOR MOSHE GANCHOFF:

1. Sabbath Chants
2. Neilah
3. Classic Synagogue Song

A REVIEW BY SHOLOM KALIB

I recall from the days of my youth the great anticipation and thrilling experience of seeing in the flesh, and hearing in person from the pulpit, some of the world famous cantors whose names, voices, and renowned recitatives were known to me only through record discs, which had become worn from innumerable replays. There was a kind of electricity in the air, perceived by a synagogue filled with eagerly awaiting lovers and connoisseurs of the cantorial art, as the choir members would take their places at the pulpit, followed by the dramatic entrance of a Kwartin, Pinchik, Vigoda, or Koussevitsky, and their likes.

Young aspiring cantors like myself often fantasized how wonderful it would be to be able to retain the marvelous renditions of the master, whether improvised, prepared, or a mixture of both. I doubt whether any even dared imagine being able to capture an entire service of one of those cantors.

A feat of exactly that type has been made possible by the release of two cassettes of the last and only surviving great master of the golden age of hazzanut - the preeminent Cantor Moshe Ganchoff - by Barry Serota, organizer and director of Musique Intemationale: his Shabbat and Neilah. On the one hand, they appear too late for either the average contemporary congregant or aspiring cantor (and even many practicing cantors) to derive their full benefit. For today's congregants, from liberal to ultra-orthodox, no longer have the background to fully understand what a cantor like Ganchoff is all about, neither intellectually/musically nor religiously/emotionally. And with the cavernous-size vacuum caused by traditional-musically imperceptive congregations universally, today's cantors have

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little if any practical use for the compact clusters of jewels of nusach and hazzanic artistry contained in the Ganchoff cassettes. On the other hand, their release constitutes the preservation of those specimens of the highest level of that once great synagogue musical tradition, which inspired throngs of our Eastern European ancestors for some three and half centuries. They are on record for the intellectually curious to study, probe, and derive some measure of that religious aesthetic thrill, which brought many a spiritual lift to our forebears.

On the Shabbat cassette are: 1.) the Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Service, from the very beginning through about half of the text of Psalm 92, *Mizmor Shir L'yom Hashabbos*; and 2.) the Shabbat Morning Service from the end of the *Shacharit K'dushakh* through most of *Mi Sheberach* following *Yekum Purkon*. What a pity the rest of that service is lost; but what a treasure has been preserved!

Throughout the cassette one hears a sterling-pure presentation of the basic nusach by an unsurpassed master. In addition, the crowning jewels in the form of cantorial recitatives include renditions of several texts, which stand out as models of that genre: these are more than recitatives of the finest level - they rival the best in all cantorial discography. They include his *Kol Hashem*, *Mizmor Shir L'yom Hashabbos*, *Av Horachamim*, and *Mi Sheberach*. And in between these highlights are ever-new, meaningful, expressive, and interpretive gestures within the general flow of the nusach. There is never a doldrum word, an uninspired phrase.

Similarly in the Neilah Service, which is almost complete, there isn't a tired word. Even in the *Uv'cheins*, every word and phrase brings model presentation of the nusach, plus an unexpected nuance here or surprise gesture there, an unexpected brilliant high note here, or a stunning coloratura there, which continually inspire. Remarkable is the persistent occurrence of this approach through all the individual nuschaot which keep coming in the Neilah Service. The crowning jewels here include the buildup from *Hashem*, *Hashem* through the incredibly overpowering rendition of the *Y'hi Rotzon (Shomea Kol Bichyos)*, the awe-inspiring rendition of *Ato Nosein Yod*, followed by *Ato Hivdalto* and *Elokeinu Velokey Avosenu M'chal Laavonosenu*. One would think that nocongregant could dare expect another ounce of emotional/inspirational energy - only to be dumbfounded by the novel and brilliant rendition of *Avinu Malkenu Z'chor Rachamecho*, and still another momentary highlight in the *Birkas Kohanim*. It all combines to comprise a Neilah Service beyond any realistic expectation, even of the well-deserved holder of the title "cantor's cantor". It is difficult to imagine hearing another rendition of this service which would rival Ganchoffs level of cantorial mastery on this cassette.

In years, nay decades, gone by, there were various fields of expertise within the cantorial profession: 1.) that of the "zoger", the greatly inspiring improviser; 2.) that of the cantor who excelled in bringing out a prepared recitative, both of which were brilliantly mastered by Cantor Ganchoff; 3.) that which consisted of the art of "zingen mit a chor", of singing the cantor solos amid choral compositions, variously accompanied or unaccompanied. Here, also, in the cassette entitled Classic Synagogue Song, Cantor Ganchoff demonstrates unsurpassed mastery of this art. Included are *Uv'chein Yiskadash* by M. Goldstein, and *Mimkom'cho* by Zeidel Rovner, both conducted by Abraham Ellstein; *Umip'nei Chatoeinu* and *Ki K'shim'cho*, both by Salomon Kashtan Weintraub, the former conducted by Morris Barash, and the latter by A.W. Binder; and *Ribono Shel Olom* (from *S'firah*) by Samuel Alman. The Weintraub *Ki K'shim'cho* as well as the Alman *Ribono Shel Olom* are rendered in re-arrangements from the original mixed choir settings for those of an all-male choir (TTBB). The other compositions, written originally for mixed choirs of boys and men, are performed with women singing the soprano and alto voice parts. While a great deal of the cantor-solo sections are rendered totally unembellished, as if to say, remaining faithful to the written score, much is considerably embellished, and in several places Cantor Ganchoff adds and/or replaces Weintraub's original material with his own. Such liberties, perhaps frowned upon by some purists, were common and entirely accepted in the Eastern European synagogue tradition. They are within the very nature of improvised chant which, in essence, is the style of the a Capella cantor solos of these compositions. In all situations, in rendering the original musical text as well as in the embellished and extended sections, Cantor Ganchoff interprets masterfully the textual as well as musical content of each composition. His own interpretations remain close to the spirit of the original, and he almost always begins and/or ends his solo-section phrases with those of the composer, thereby leading smoothly into the ensuing choral responses or sections. Particularly in the Weintraub *Umip'nei Chatoeinu* and *Ki K'shim'cho*, Cantor Ganchoff brings a level musicality, depth of stylistic perceptivity, and imaginative interpretation - to say nothing of vocal mastery - which is unparalleled in the discography of this genre, the cantorial solos of which are the very backbone of these classic examples of the Eastern European choral composition.

Through these three cassettes, Cantor Ganchoff has etched his imprint for posterity on all phases of the cantorial art, even far beyond any and all of his previously-released marvelous recordings. For this, the efforts and investment of Barry Serota and his Musique Internationale enterprises richly deserve full acknowledgment and congratulations

The Ganchoff Neilah cassette is a part of a High Holiday trilogy, produced by Barry Serota for the Institute for Jewish Sound Recording. These tapes, as well as the other Ganchoff tapes reviewed, and numerous additional recordings of liturgical, folk, and art music are released on the Musique Internationale label, and distributed directly by Barry Serota. He can be reached at 3012 West Jarvis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645, and by phone at (773) 743-3012.

USING ORAL TRADITION TO RECONSTRUCT BAROQUE SYNAGOGUE MUSIC

By CHARLES HELLER

The recently released CD *I Heard A Voice From Heaven*¹ features Cantor Louis Danto and violist Rivka Golani in a program that includes liturgical music of the Spanish and Portuguese community dating from the 18th century. One of the pieces, a setting of *Pitchu Li* (Psalm 118), has such a fascinating history that it is worth discussing. As the musical arranger, I challenged myself to take what has come down to us as a short melody and convert it (back?) into a Da Capo aria in 18th century style (Ex. 1):

The idea for doing this was suggested by the music itself.

This melody is known from an 18th century manuscript from the Ets Haim library in Amsterdam (the ms. is now at the Hebrew University, which might recall to suggestible minds the legend that in the days of the Messiah the dead will roll through the earth and end up in Jerusalem). The ms. bears the title *Alel D'Italia* and consists of 16 bars to the text *Pitchu Li* (Ps. 118: 19-20). It is arranged for 3 voices. This piece is given by Adler², who also drew attention to several harmonic clashes which are clearly mistakes. This is hardly surprising to anyone familiar with synagogue choirs. In earlier times synagogue musicians usually lacked professional training, and it is common to find in their music books amateurish part-writing that is full of mistakes.

This melody has also been preserved through oral tradition. Variants of it are known in several sephardi communities, where it has been sung to such texts as *Ein Keloheinu* and other parts of the *Hallel*³.

¹ *I Heard A Voice From Heaven*; Jewish Devotional Music of the 18th-20th centuries. Toronto: Cadenza Records 110 (1996). Available from Cadenza Records, Tel (416) 636-3881.

² Israel Adler, *Musical Life and Traditions of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam in the 18th Century* (Jerusalem: the Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1974), pp 54-55.

³ Adler, op cit. notes 24 and 57 There is a full discussion of these variants given by Edwin Seroussi: "Hamanginot Ha-atikot", *Pe'amim-studies in Oriental Jewry SO* (Winter 5752) 99-131

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This melody has also been preserved through oral tradition in a more “Mozartian” form by the Joel and Lewis families of Canada, from whom I learned it while preparing my anthology *A Testament of Song*.⁴ These families sing this melody for *Shir Hamaalot* on Festivals, with other special melodies on other occasions. Miss Freda Lewis wrote to me in 1990: “Ever since I was a little girl and sat in a high chair next to my Daddy, I heard these tunes. And now I am a 91 year old lady, I still sing them. My Father learned them from his father, so they are pretty ancient.” (Ex. 2).

It is significant that this melody has been preserved by a family that enjoys singing and is knowledgeable about music. It is clearly not an easy melody to sing, since it has a wide range (an octave plus a 4th) and includes a difficult leap (a major 10th). This again points to its likely origin as an art song.

I chose to use this outline of *Shir Hamaalot* in my version of *Pitchu Li* because it is the version that most demonstrates artistic vocal technique. The variants given by Seroussi⁵ suggest that in the course of passing down the melody by oral tradition, different solutions have arisen to handle this difficult melodic outline. For example, in one case the leap to the upper octave occurs halfway through the melody (bar 9), while another version simply keeps the whole melody within one octave (compare Ex. 1 bars 12-13 with the analogous passage in Ex. 2).

The fact that this melody was given the title *Alel D'Italia* suggests that it came into the liturgy from Italy. Adler⁶ has noted its affinity with Baroque aria style, in particular the well-known aria *Pur Dicasti* by Lotti (Ex.3).

When we look at all these various sources, we get the impression that, as Adler suggested, the melody we are discussing began life as an Italian aria. We can guess that it was taken up by the 18th century Amsterdam community, which we know supported good music, and gradually the tune found its way to different texts. In this process, different variants or ‘descendants’ of the tune evolved. Any polished harmony or counterpoint that was originally present disappeared, so that by the 20th century we only had a melody line, except for the one version in the Amsterdam manuscript⁷. This version is not of immediate use to performers today, since it

⁴ Charles Heller, ed., *A Testament of Song* (Toronto: Beth Emeth Synagogue, 1990). p. 52
⁵ op. cit. (see n 3), pp.124-5

⁶ op. cit. (seen 2), n 58. (See for example *Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias* (Schirmer), pp. 50-51).

⁷ This process has been traced for other pieces of art music which degenerated into a “kind of popular song” See Adler op. cit. (n. 2). p 24

cannot simply be picked up and sung, but it does show us what performers in the 18th century had in mind, namely a polished art-music style.

The next step in making the *Alel D'Italia* come to life was to find material for a B section so as to make a complete ABA aria-form. On looking through the music section of the London Spanish and Portuguese Siddur⁸ I found some melodies that seemed to fit musically. I was even more delighted to find that they were the traditional melodies for those very verses I needed music for (Even *mu'asu*, Ps. 118: 22-3).

So finally I had the opening verses from one source, and verses 22-23 from another source. Verse 24 (*Zeh hayom*) was set to the melody of the A section, complete with fiorituras and a little tag ending in 18th century 'Da Capo style'. It remains to be mentioned that, obviously, the music recorded on the CD (for voice, viola and keyboard) would not be suitable for most traditional services: either it would have to be arranged again for choir (as in the original ms.) or would be performed in a concert. Both these options would have been acceptable 300 years ago.

Would it not be strange if these really were all parts of an original single aria, the parts having been separated over the years and now brought back together again?

⁸ Book of Prayer, (London: Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, 1991), Vol 1 (Daily and Occasional Prayers), pp. 333-4, No. 62

⁹ For a guide to this style, see for example *The Art or Ormentation and Embelishment in the Renaissance and the Baroque*. Vanguard Records VSL 1 1044-45 (1967). See also Robert Donington, *A Performer's Guide to Baroque Music*. London: Faber and Faber, 1973. Updated as *Baroque Music: Style and Performance*. London, Faber Music. 1982

Ex. 1

Pit - - hu li — sha-a-re tse-deq | a - vo vam — o-deh yah

Ex. 2

Shir — ha - ma-a - lot

zeh — ha-sha - ar — | la - a-do-nay — tsa-di-qim_ ya - vo-u vo

etc.

etc.

Ex. 3

Pur di - ce - sti